



RS Digital Incubator
for Museums

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DOORS Incubation Strategy



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Abstract

This deliverable outlines the outputs and preparations made for The Incubation Strategy. It includes the concept, strategy and core aims, methodology, programme architecture and the overview of stages and structural elements.

The proposed methodology for incubation programme leans on the notion of collective intelligence to compliment workshops and mentoring with multi-layered exchanges, incl. peer-to-peer opportunities for learning and cross-pilot review processes, both at a formal and informal level. An agile approach to the development of the programme and flexible working structure will enable pilot teams to reconsider their approach to digital strategies on a bigger level — maintaining both ambitious and challenging ideas, on the one hand, and capacity of integrating with reality on the other. Shared learning programme agitates museums to take collective advantage of digital and move forward as effective collaborators. Iterating and adapting the programme based on the in-depth inquiry of the needs of the museums ensures context-sensitivity and enduring impact on the further capacities of participating museums.

The document focuses on the strategy and will be further complimented by an Incubation report (D4.4), delivering in-detail the outline of program points and involved agents.



‘When I talk about “digital literacy” and “digital competencies” I often use the analogy of when you learn another language, you only become truly fluent when you begin to dream in that language. Digital fluency, to me, is a lot about having the ability to dream and see possibilities in new ways – and then to be able to bring people along with you to realise those dreams.’

Seb Chan

1. Introduction

In 2016, the Digital Transformation in Museums report, Axiell suggested that digitalisation in museums is not about installing an app or digital service, but about digitalising cultural services and re-designing relationships with museum audiences.¹ The digital nature of cultural offers imposes a change in the value chains and demands new value and business models.²

Therefore, a central assessment question of the project is how the museum sector can develop digital strategies and values to adapt and reinvent themselves in order to strengthen their performance, reach their audiences and develop new ones, and ensure financial recovery and sustainability.³ Thus, DOORS - Digital Incubator for Museums’ approach is not solely focused on the technology itself, but on the underlying strategies, transformation processes and value propositions required, as well as the shared benefits of working with creative & technology partners. Oonagh Murphy has rightfully pointed out it takes a confident institution to recognise that whilst digital technologies are quickly becoming imperative to contemporary museum management and practice, these technologies must advance a museum’s strategic and business plans if they are to truly add value to the work of museums.⁴

Given that much of museums’ digital activity is currently reactive, the foundation of the DOORS Incubation Strategy is centred on a strategic and structural approach to digital, so that

¹ Axiell Archives Libraries Museums (2016). Digital Transformation in the Museum Industry. Museum Report 2016.

<https://www.axiell.com.cdn.triggerfish.cloud/uploads/2019/04/digital-transformation-in-the-museum-industry.pdf>

² Bertacchini, E., & Morando, F. (2013). The future of museums in the digital age: New models for access to and use of digital collections. *International Journal of Arts Management*, 15(2), 60-72.

³ Australian museum and galleries association (2013). Museums and sustainability.

https://www.amaga.org.au/sites/default/files/uploaded-content/website-content/SubmissionsPolicies/museums_and_sustainability_policy_2003-2012_to_be_updated.pdf

⁴ Oonagh Murphy (2018) Coworking Spaces, Accelerators and Incubators: Emerging Forms of Museum Practice in an Increasingly Digital World, *Museum International*, 70:1-2, 62-75, Falk and Sheppard 2006; Peacock, Lu, and Swatman 2007



organisations can picture and secure a sustainable, innovative, digitally enabled and thriving future for the sector. The approach builds on involving museums directly in this rather complex process through an intensive two-stage incubation programme that will provide them with a diagnostics framework they can apply to their own contexts, engage them in continuous evaluation and analysis processes and support them in developing their own sustainability plan as well as a pilot embedment in their overall strategy.

While digitalisation has indeed a lot to offer to the museum sector⁵, it still remains **undiscovered for some institutions, and for many – mainly small and medium size museums – an unaffordable range of opportunities**, perceived as a controversial development in which the online ends up cannibalising the onsite.

In addition, digitalisation brings **ethical and legal framework questions** such as the implementation of data governance models or GDPR compliant company processes. Thus, the DOORS incubation programme will approach digital transformation from multiple perspectives, including the museums' internal and external operations, to acknowledge its challenging and controversial aspects; suggest frameworks and methodologies to organically integrate digitalisation in the general developmental strategy of institutions as opposed to isolating these endeavours and investments; and fuel the comprehension and engagement of museums' digital audiences.

2. Objectives of Incubation Programme

The overarching aim of DOORS is to become a truly European incubator for small and medium sized museums that will support them in their digital transformation journeys. The incubator will seed and nurture digital thinking in institutions involved in the Incubation programme and support their work on pilots that will build a long-lasting network of DOORS digitally maturing actors. We have broken down this aim into five specific and measurable objectives:

1. Increasing the digital maturity of the museums and empowering their teams by engaging them in addressing the overall digital strategy of their organisations and not only the digital technology behind the pilot.
2. Developing a thorough needs assessment and diagnostics tools for museums to understand their digital technical readiness levels.
3. Targeting 4 specific innovation areas identified as essential to driving change in the sector.

⁵ The Guardian (2020). How digital tech can bridge gaps between museums and audiences.
<https://www.theguardian.com/culture-professionals-network/2015/oct/23/digital-technology-museums-audiences-collaboration>

4. Tapping into the collective intelligence of the museums, technical providers, mentors, jury, advisory board and the consortium to amplify impact and build the basis of a long-lasting community of practice.
5. Creating a Pilot and Incubation model to enable experimentation and knowledge transfer and respond to the challenges of digital transformation.

2.1. Digital maturity in museums

As Andrew Montiel de Shuman indicates in the Digital transformation Agenda commissioned by Europeana: “Digital maturity is how people, organisations and the world understand and move from digital as a bunch of technology tools to human engagement through digital tools (...), understanding about how this makes sense within the world, within human beings making meaning in general. A more immature perspective on digital for me is flashy technology, being enamoured or being fascinated by just the new thing that is coming out”⁶. With this in mind, the concept of digital maturity is a useful frame to explore digital strategies and approach their assessment. The success of digital strategies depends on an organisation’s well-balanced and coherent use of digital endeavours to support its overarching mission. This means organisations need to be capable of identifying, comprehending and assessing how the digital sphere will contribute to their evolution and the overall digital transformation, as well as what skills are necessary to enable and sustain such a process.⁷

The Consortium has developed a framework and methodology to help 40 European institutions advance their digital maturity, starting from a comprehensive needs assessment exercise. The museums selected by the DOORS jury to take part in the first stage of the incubation programme were asked during the open call and submission process to analyse their status quo with regard to infrastructure, teams and audiences to define relevant goals and respectively assess their current needs in connection to the overall strategy of their institutions. 20 of these institutions will then be given the opportunity to participate in the intensive second stage of the incubation programme.

“Digitally maturing organisations are four times more likely to provide employees with needed skills than organisations at lower ends of the spectrum”⁸. This two-stage process aims to strengthen the level of digital maturity of institutions, recognising its fundamental importance in ensuring the impact and sustainability of future digital transformation projects.

⁶ Europeana (2020). The Digital Transformation Agenda and GLAMs.

https://pro.europeana.eu/files/Europeana_Professional/Publications/Digital%20transformation%20reports/The%20digital%20transformation%20agenda%20and%20GLAMs%20-%20Culture24%20findings%20and%20outcomes.pdf

⁷ Osterman, M. D. (2018). Museums of the future: embracing digital strategies, technology and accessibility. *Museological Review: Museums of the Future*, 22, 10-17.

⁸ MIT Sloan Management Review (2015). Strategy, not Technology drives Digital Transformation.

<https://sloanreview.mit.edu/projects/strategy-drives-digital-transformation/>

2.2. Needs assessment and diagnostics

As discussed above, the success of DOORS will be linked to its success in enabling participating museums to carry out a comprehensive needs assessment and further, establish a cohesive digital strategy that identifies not just fragmentary needs but considers their ecosystems.⁹

The analysis will focus on five overarching digital transformation priorities in the museum sector:

1. Digital strategies, e.g. comprehending possibilities and limits, defining co-dependencies and realistic goals
2. Audience comprehension, e.g. data aggregation & analysis, target group specifications
3. Smart audience engagement, e.g. storytelling, memberships, participatory content models
4. Empowerment (of institutions and their teams) and sustainability (of digital tools and offers)
5. Monetisation, e.g. digital revenue (marketing, subscription models, etc.)

The needs analysis phase will contribute to refining the innovation areas & pilot frameworks, serve as a research basis for the pilots and be used for extracting lessons-learned & recommendations in the e-publication.

The assessment phase will also be carried out throughout the first stage incubation period and will significantly inform a **Diagnostics Framework**. Using a sequence of individual and group feedback loops conducted by each of the 40 museums taking part in the first stage pilot, as well as service design elements and the practical dimensions of the project canvas (workshops, peer-to-peer sessions, experts and stakeholders' involvement), the consortium will develop a framework for museum's further needs assessment and analysis. DOORS organically connects all the deliverables into one ecosystem. Thus, as the piloting institutions map their approach to pilots over the course of both stages of the Incubation and feed into the diagnostics framework, the tool remains in the making to eventually be finalised for use beyond the DOORS lifespan.

2.3. Collective Intelligence

It has become a common belief in the museum sector and beyond, that digital strategies should be accompanied by “an ethical and moral responsibility to create networks of competences between museums”¹⁰ and foster what Pierre Lévy and Derrick de Kerckhove called *collective intelligence* - the capacity of human communities to cooperate intellectually in creation,

⁹ Minoska-Pavlovskaja, M. (2019). DIGITAL STRATEGIES FOR MUSEUMS. *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 9(22), 145-161.

¹⁰ Mu.SA Museum Sector Alliance (2019). Museum of the Future. Insights and reflections from 10 international museums. www.project-musa.eu



innovation and invention.¹¹ This view has been outlined by the European Union (EU) in what it calls Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), which requires the collaboration of different societal actors throughout the entire innovation and research process. In an increasingly knowledge-dependant society it becomes imperative to rely on collective intelligence as the way towards more responsible innovation.

DOORS' proposed methodology for the incubation programme uses the notion of collective intelligence to create peer-to-peer opportunities for learning, cross-pilot review processes & feedback loops as well as establishing frequent pilot exchange activities. These elements work both at a formal and informal level to create multi-layered exchanges. Embedded in the strategy of the incubation programme, this approach will strengthen the formation of, identification with and commitment to the network of DOORS. It will contribute to building a sustainable network of museum practitioners and stakeholders and a long-term community of practice that in the long term will make visible and expand the innovative competence within the European museum landscape beyond the lifespan of a single given project.

While the project engages the pilots in the direct network and shared workspace of the incubator, the underlying long-term strategy is to create a programme-based interface that enables a variety of networked connections beyond the agents directly involved in the project, attracts new actors to take-up resources, outputs and pilot models (produced within the project) and leverages the communication and outreach effects.

2.4. Digital priorities and innovation areas

The digital application areas specific to the museum context have been compartmentalised into four innovation areas outlined below. These have been instrumental in:

- the development of pilot proposals by the applicants
- securing a diversity of pilot projects
- developing the open call and submissions process
- structuring the shared learning experience
- ensuring specific strands of focus for the field research
- informing the approach to the diagnostics framework

Already in the open call and submission phase, this segmentation has delivered significant learnings about the status quo which will enable us to address the issues identified and refine the programme.

¹¹ Pierre Lévy (1999).

The consortium has identified **4 Innovation Areas** for the 40 innovation pilots that will undergo the two pilot stages.

1. **Innovating audience engagement:**
developing innovative (hybrid and online) audience engagement formats to strengthen audience participation and loyalty. Pilots should develop interaction, participation and mediation tools and technologies for presentation based, as well as hands-on & two-way communication formats. Experiments should include an appropriate audience analysis and assessment of the best engagement platform (web, social media, app, etc)
2. **New distribution & revenue models:**
pilots should experiment with digital technologies, tools, and existing platforms (developing web integration pilots) to enable novel ways of content distribution and revenue models (e.g., membership subscription, etc). Participants can work on increasing visibility of digital contents, metadata standards, digital narration strategies, digital distribution channels, low-tech presentations, or content varieties for different target groups (active vs. passive, digital vs. virtual) etc. Pilots in this innovation area will be encouraged to develop synergies and technical integration possibilities with major European cultural platform providers.
3. **Integrating infrastructure:**
to ensure diversity in TRL levels and include museums with no or few ICT pre-investments, which is according to UNESCO still the major obstacle for digitalisation in the sector¹², this Innovation Area will specifically target infrastructural pilots integrating ICT (information and communication technologies). Another focus will lie on building semantic infrastructure for smart museum developments.¹³ While the priority clearly lies on the integration process of the technology (including roll-out support, data security, value chain integration), pilots can include a part of the infrastructural purchase in the overall budget (up to 40%) if duly justified and proportional.
4. **ICT museum collaboration:**
sharing efforts and synergies within this collaborative innovation area should allow organisations to experiment with digital pilots one individual museum alone would be unable to. This innovation area seeks to encourage experimental pilots which change the use, application, or perception of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) innovation in the museum sector. Due to the collaborative nature of this innovation area, single-institution applications are not eligible.

¹² UNESCO (May 2020). MUSEUMS AROUND THE WORLD IN THE FACE OF COVID-19.
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373530>

¹³ Korzun, Dmitry & Varfolomeyev, Aleksey & Yalovitsyna, Svetlana & Volokhova, Valentina. (2017). Semantic infrastructure of a smart museum: toward making cultural heritage knowledge usable and creatable by visitors and professionals. *Personal and Ubiquitous Computing*, 21. 10.1007/s00779-016-0996-7.

2.5. Enabling experimentation and knowledge transfer

Digital transformation requires building a comprehensive approach that can certainly not be achieved overnight. Rather, if it is to be successful and impactful, it needs careful analysis and consideration, planning and training prior to the rollout. Launching new digital offers will certainly require considering new approaches to management, organisational structures, possible business models, skills and resources acquisition, prioritisation and distribution.¹⁴ These new models will have to be embedded in the existing museum offer, be carefully balanced so as not to cannibalise current programmes or overburden the teams and be relevant to the overall strategy of the institution and its evolution. Experimentation will be a vital ingredient to attempting a successful transformation without compromising existing business sustainability. To allow for experimentation in a safe environment, DOORS has developed a two-stage piloting process for museums to systematise their digital experiments. Throughout the two-stage development of their pilots, the museums gain access to a unique pool of international experts, technical providers and know-how from more digitally savvy institutions and sectors.

The Incubation programme purposefully looks into both: (1) improving the framing, design and value creation/sustainability model of existing, established digital initiatives within the museums, as well as (2) supporting the launch of completely new projects. The goal is to help museums - practically or by following the experimentation of the others - embed new digital offers in their established programmes and infrastructure, manage the dilemma triggered by the coexistence of new digital activities and existing online and onsite ones, and think about possible externalities.

The project's main target group is **small and medium sized institutions**. The size is not defined based on the size of the collection, but rather on the capacities of the institution. Still, for the benefit of exchange and leveraging knowledge and networks from bigger institutions, **large museums** were allowed to enter the Innovation Area 4 (ICT museum collaboration) together with a minimum of one small and medium sized organisation. This would allow smaller partners to profit from the experience and networks of larger partners and ignite long-term partnerships. The consortium further targets **geographical balance** to ensure participation from across all European regions. In turn, the balanced representation ensures the diversity of knowledge and expertise within the shared learning endeavour and enables us to bridge the gaps inherent in the sector and its institutions.

¹⁴ Decker, J. (Ed.). (2015). *Technology and digital initiatives: innovative approaches for museums*. Rowman & Littlefield.



3. The incubation programme: strategy and core aims

Digital mentorship is about strategic investment empowering change. Incubating and nurturing original inventive ideas and processes are the main attributes of the programme. Museums today need to be dynamic, adaptive, tolerant, and active in the emerging social, political, natural, and digital environments. Fostering innovation relates more to mentalities and practices, and investment in people, time and tolerance within a work environment.

The DOORS team is taking an agile and iterative approach to the development of the programme, i.e. iterating and adapting the programme throughout its implementation based on the identified needs of the museums. This enables the DOORS team to respond to the needs and progress of the specific institutions and their teams and enables the incorporation of opportunities as they arise.

Within the multi-constituent, innovative and shared learning context of DOORS, this approach is considered to be the most appropriate way of delivering an incubation programme. It allows us to focus on the implementation of agile and innovative digital approaches and ensures we have an enduring impact on the participating museums' programmes and infrastructure. Moreover, designing the Incubation Programme as a process driven by shared learnings, allows us to pursue innovation that would not occur under individualistic/hermetic experimentation or business as usual. As we are designing the programme on an ongoing basis, we commit to assessing the impact and value similarly rigorously.

At its core, the goal of the Incubation programme is to accelerate institutional and sectoral digitalisation programmes and contribute to the sectoral collective intelligence of how to future proof the museum sector's ability to incorporate innovation predicated on or informed by digital technology.

One key aim of the incubation programme is to equip the teams implementing the pilots with the necessary resilience, ability and know-how for their execution. It is highly likely that many of the original pilot ideas put forth will go through changes once the teams have gained more understanding, knowledge and confidence, and have heard the feedback of peers and fellow incubants. The DOORS incubation programme aims to tackle this challenge head-on through an agile and flexible programme that builds capacity for the implementation of digital in various areas in incubation stage I and equips the museums for the execution of the pilots through specified mentoring sessions in incubation stage II.



3.1 The incubation programme: programme architecture

3.1.1 Preparatory Stage

Application Process

The consortium deliberately designed a very resource intensive application and evaluation process to ensure, on the operational level, a systematic exchange, learning and networking with experts and practitioners across all stages of running the programme. Both the application submissions and the Incubation are deliberately split into two phases to allow museums more time to consider in depth what digital means for their specific institution, how their pilot aligns with their strategic goals, capacities and resources. Integrating the feedback of both the jury and the applicants increases the relevance and practical applicability of selected methodologies and approaches.

Both as a learning and funding programme, DOORS acknowledges the necessity for museums to think about digital endeavours in an ecosystemic way, rather than merely following a project-based logics. This indeed necessitates a different approach to the resources and longevity of the commitment, organisational structures and communication, both internally and externally.

The Orbit

A pool of cultural and museum professionals and creative technologists with a wealth of experience in the digitalisation of the sector have been structured in 3 different layers:

- **Board of advisors** to give strategic directions in the design of the incubation program and further support the dissemination and outreach
- **Jury** to offer tactical advice and recommendations on the wider ecosystem, set additional goals and address possible obstacles based on the insights into specific institutions and pilots gained in the evaluation and selection process of the pilot projects.
- **Mentors** are the frontier, the hands-on dimension of the programme focusing on the day-to-day mentorship of the individual pilots, selected and finalised for participation in the Incubation stage II.

Each mentor will be assigned to 3-4 expertise-related pilots, involving them in the individual pilot assessments, focusing on the evaluation of the pilots, their written guidelines and the final recommendations of the project. The mentors are expected to contribute indirectly to the project's exploitation by giving feedback on the evaluation & sustainability plans of the pilots, advancing the lessons learnt and adapting project outputs for use by stakeholders beyond DOORS. Further, some of the mentors are expected to nurture policy making in digital transformation areas based on the project's outputs and collected recommendations.

The final outline of mentors will be defined over the course of Incubation Stage I, following the immersion into the shared learning endeavour and bilateral communication with the 40 pilots. The choice will also take into account the feedback of the Jury members and workshops leaders.



Needs Assessment and Interviews

Part of the diagnostics framework, the needs assessment is a sector-wide study of the current status quo, enablers, and blockers for the strategic advancement of the sector. It encompasses a survey targeting museums and a sequence of interviews with stakeholders, policymakers and experts working in the field. The results of the study will be summarised in a report and followed by a public discussion. Its aim is to ensure that DOORS as a whole is rooted in the needs of the community it is serving.

Sparkle report and case studies

DOORS abolishes the wording “best practise” and suggests a more metaphorical approach, looking for cases that offer “sparkles” of inspiration and learning, derived both from what may be deemed as success-stories and the “wrong-turns” taken, as well as experimental and iterative projects still in-the making.

This endeavour will focus on identifying ingredients for successful partnerships, collaborative processes, business and revenue models and inspiring stories. Identified sparkle case-studies will inform the further processes, particularly the identification and selection of technological providers and the design of public sessions.

Aligning with the general process-driven approach of the Incubation programme, the report structure has also been re-conceptualised accordingly. The initial edition of the Sparkle report will be published as an invitation to start the conversation and offer a basis for it. However, as the Incubation programme becomes inhabited by pilots during its two stages and is shaped by contributions from invited experts and mentors, inspiration sessions as well as dialogues between museums and digital solutions providers, we expect more “sparkles” related to the Incubation programme to emerge. New case-cards will be added throughout the programme, capturing its sensitivities and learnings. The full case-card deck will be published at the end of the Incubation Programme.

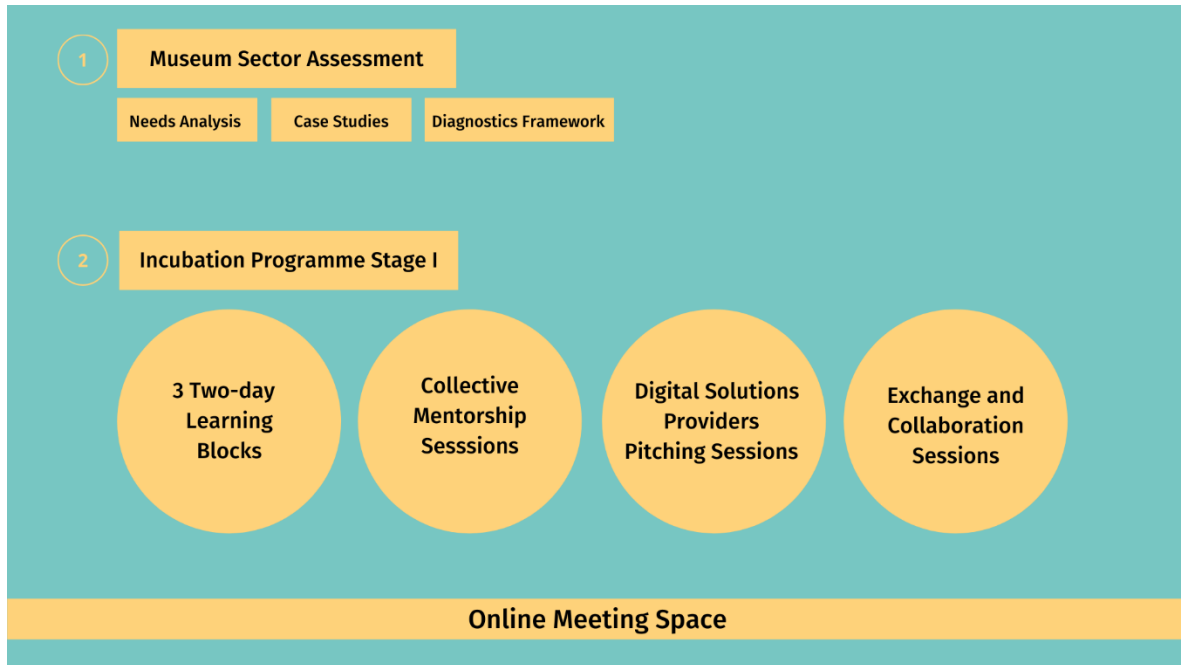
3.1.2 Overview of Incubation Programme Stages I & II

3.1.2.1 Stage I programme breakdown

Incubation Stage I is a carefully curated and shared digital space dedicated to “working through” the question of what digital transformation really means in the museum sector and across practices.

Stage I is an investment in building up more digital confidence, setting up digital mindsets of the museum staff and building a network of peers within the cultural sector, across geographies and practices. The aim of this stage is to build capacity, awareness, and improve the internal ability of institutions and organisations to make better long-term choices predicated on digital

technology by creating a better understanding of the ways of working within a rapidly and ever-changing digital environment. This helps incubants improve their ability to select and work with technology and digital solutions providers whose know-how and portfolios fit their endeavours, as well as set up long-lasting collaborations within the sector.



Kick off and museum onboarding

A so-called “Ice-Breaking” session kicks off the programme. This specially commissioned and designed workshop and co-creation session aims to provide the space for an in-depth introduction of the pilots and the team behind DOORS (consortium and board of advisors).

Core workshops

Knowing that innovation, transformation, or change can feel uncomfortable for a lot of people, we want to dedicate time to framing the conversation so that it prepares participants to explore potentially uncomfortable insights, see them as opportunities for growth rather than threats and understand that mistakes are part of the process.

The three core workshops will guide participants one step at a time and each focus on a specific domain: from a general overview and building a shared vocabulary, through looking into organisational structures, operations and skills and up to approaching and comprehending audiences. Workshops will be made up of different individual blocks each including the presentation of different methodologies (as appropriate to the topics in question), interactive sessions and cooling-off periods for pilots to reflect and give feedback. The latter is analysed and integrated in all elements of the programme, thus enabling a deeper cohesion and relevance of the programme.



Inspiration sessions: artistic and institutional

Each core workshop day opens with an artistic statement and is accompanied by deep dives into specific institutional and or other collaborative examples. To complement the input given in the workshop sessions, we have chosen to present concrete use cases and creative practices to inspire the participants.

Peer-to-Peer sessions

The three planned peer-to-peer sessions will be a different exchange and diffusion platform for the cohort of pilots. As a follow-up to workshop sessions and the thorough analysis of the feedback given in short surveys, the DOORS team will offer a framework and a platform for focused, informal conversations between pilot teams in between the core workshops. Leaning on the input of museums at the end of the workshops, in each session the cohort will be broken into smaller groups.

Digital Solutions Providers and pitching sessions

An interface between museums and creative technology professionals is a sustainable way to address transformation and audience engagement challenges by accessing expertise and innovation available in the creative tech business sector and their communities. This dimension of the programme will consist of two sessions, each including a panel discussion with a curated list of speakers and followed by a round of presentations/pitching sessions. The latter will be offering fit-for-use solutions and approaches for the challenges faced, and highlighting the question of sustainability and efficiency in terms of resources allocation. The programme will motivate participants from the museum and creative tech sectors to think bilaterally about the sector's needs and innovation goals.

Collective Mentorship sessions

To close Stage I, we plan collective mentorship sessions that lean heavily on the in-depth comprehension of the pilots, teams and institutions behind them, and internal feedback from both museums and involved workshop leaders. These sessions will aid in sharpening the innovation areas' definition and requirements together with mentors and support the pilots in the final determination of their innovation area, as well as in detailing their applications before final submission for the open call that leads into the second stage of the incubation programme.

Stage I is particularly focused on digital capacity building, supporting the transformation of museum sectors' digital capabilities and opportunities to secure its future as a sustainable, digitally enabled and thriving sector.

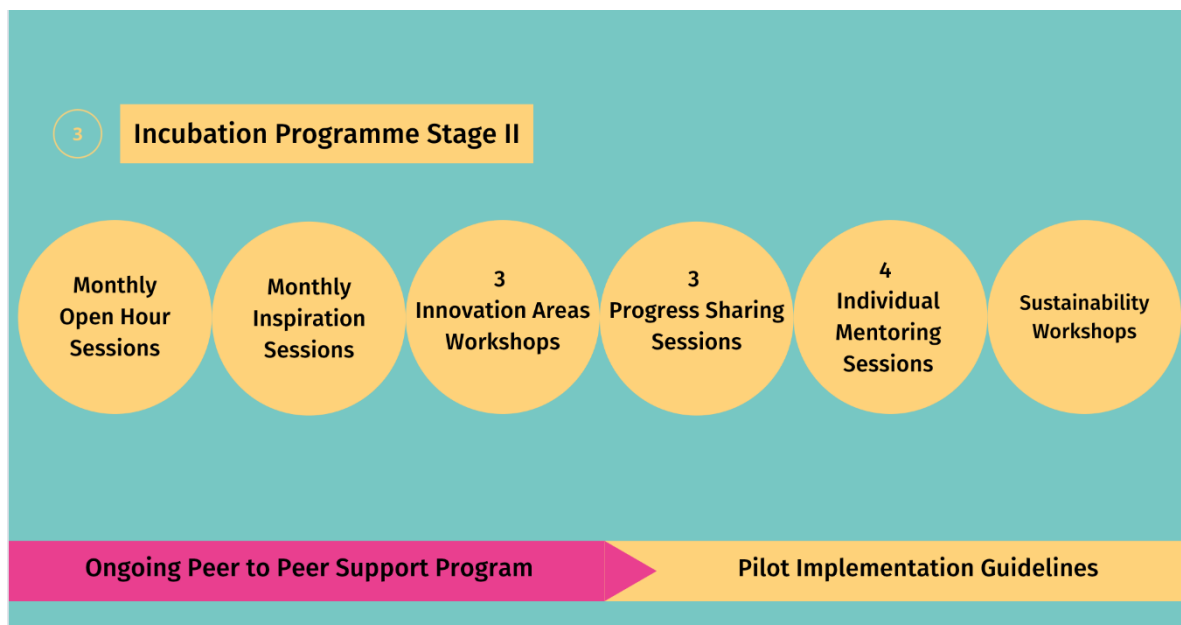
Crucial for the incubation programme is to enhance the resilience and ability of the teams behind the pilots to execute. The financial support within stage I amounts to 1.500 Euros per pilot team and is intended to enable the teams to dedicate time and effort to the programme (workshops and peer-to-peer sessions), and, beyond it, to reflect upon and rethink their initial concept and finalise their applications for incubation stage II.

It is possible, and implied by the approach and expected learning curve, that some of the original pilot ideas will change under the influence of tailored workshops, inspiration sessions and feedback from peers and fellow-pilots.

3.1.2.2 Stage II programme breakdown

Incubation stage II overall aims to help museum teams develop and validate their proposed pilots, consider their further sectoral and market opportunities, build viable product versions (either stand-alone or as phases in longer-term endeavours), ensure targeted audiences and prepare institutions to secure external funding.

The invited mentors will be sector-recognised experts in technology, digital strategy, and technology-informed innovation with experience in the cultural sector, and aware of the context and challenges participating museums operate in (whether it's competing needs, limited budgets, internal power dynamics, or infrastructural realities that external consultants or representatives of technology companies often don't have).



Monthly “Open Hour Sessions”

The open hour sessions are a simple format for the regular exchange between the 20 pilots and the DOORS team to discuss questions of relevance to the Incubation programme and progress.

Individual Mentoring Sessions

Each pilot will receive three mentoring sessions from one specifically designated expert mentor and an additional mentoring unit by a second mentor from a different expertise area. The sessions will be distributed in time to align with the various stages of implementation - the



start/outlining of the project plan, mid-term/“equator” and pre-finalisation phases - and will be followed up with recommendations.

Workshops

The detailed profiles of the 20 selected pilots for incubation stage II, the feedback of the Jury and input of the designated mentors will determine the precise focus of the three workshops forming an integral part of incubation stage II. They will align with the practical needs and assessment of the 20 pilots and their sustainability goals.

Progress Sharing Sessions

The three progress sharing sessions will follow workshops and precede individual mentorship sessions, in order to enhance their impact. Pilots will be clustered according to innovation areas to present their progress and receive feedback.

Peer-to-peer Scheme

Each pilot will be assigned a “buddy organisation” from the pool of other piloting museums. This system is designed to foster peer-reviews that sharpen the pilot development, knowledge exchange within the group and emotional cohesion of the cohort.

Inspiration Sessions

As the pilots will get hands-on and start carving their ideas into reality, monthly inspiration sessions will offer yet another dimension of support, highlighting practical aspects of digital project implementation, particularly looking into collaborative endeavours and sustainability strategies. Inspiration will

Sustainability workshops

The workshops part of the Ecsite conference will combine training and presentation of the pilot outcomes to museum operators across Europe. This will open the potential for systematic pilot adoption by interested stakeholders. The sustainability workshops will also support the roll-out of the pilots’ individual sustainability & action plans and will serve DOORS’ overall exploitation strategy.

Collection of pilot guidelines

In the final stages of the incubation programme, the consortium will collect and review the guidelines to the implementation of the project pilots developed by the teams behind them. The guidelines will be included in a comprehensive guide intended as a resource for other institutions interested in implementing similar pilots and will be structured as follows: strategy (goals, audience, format, structure, business plan), technology and commissioning specifications (in-house, outsource, maintenance models), implementation timeline and costs, implementation processes & phases (specification sheet), types of collaboration and external expertise required, team constellations and capacities required, and communication measures. A draft guide will be shared and reviewed by external advisors to identify missing areas. A special review process will be organised.



Guideline feedback of mentors

As a constituent part of the pilot guidelines, mentors will deliver the review of pilots' guidelines and their own summary and key learnings from both the process that pilots have undergone and the products, i.e. the delivered tangible projects.

Evaluation of Incubation

The evaluation of the piloting process will take the form of interviews and questionnaires at defined key-phases of the incubation programme. These will become part of a final summary that analyses the implementation progress, TRL progress, the learnings taken from the incubation and the impact generated through the pilots.

3.2 Incubation: Structural Elements

The goals of the Incubation programme are two-dimensional: institutional (individual) and sectoral (collective). At an institutional level, the goal is to support museums in discovering (through learning and exchange) and developing (through piloting and incubation) models that support the distribution of inquiry and learning (incl. applicable tools) across the museum and move away from the project-by-project approach to digital development. The incubation program provides the necessary tools and approaches to build sustainable practices, alongside project-based agenda: launching projects that impact, promote, and amplify culture and museum relevance. At a sectoral level, the programme aims to set up frameworks for collaborations both between actors within the sector and outside of it (for instance, museums and the creative and tech sector).

3.2.1 Digital Space of the Programme

Programme-wise the DOORS consortium is committed to creating a space of shared inquiry and risk-taking, where emergent context-sensitive ideas are nurtured, tested and established through iteration. DOORS particularly focuses on small and medium-scale institutions that lack the resources to tackle digital development. In addition to the lack of funding and staff shortages institutions face, professionals in small and medium-sized museums rarely have access to development opportunities (whether it's training or networking opportunities) which exacerbates the gap in digital capacity between small and large museums. Incubation allows to create a framework and shared context where DOORS community members and their pilots will flourish. Tool-wise, pilots will be using Microsoft Teams for communication, planning and sharing needs. They will also have access to a shared calendar and a repository of the workshop materials.



3.2.2 Collaboration

As a sector we need to acknowledge that we are struggling to take collective advantage of digital. As Seb Chan has beautifully put it, “digital transformation” is not a state change from caterpillar to butterfly, but a continual organisational change process. In the cultural sector, this change will only flourish as a collective, pan-institutional action. Singular institutional actions have limits – especially as so much of digital opportunity requires a different way of thinking at scale, as well as different approaches to ‘infrastructure’.” Therefore, the DOORS team centres the Incubation programme on shared values, needs and knowledge and aims to be responsive to changes in the sector at large¹⁵.

3.2.3 DOORS Community Values

For DOORS, co-creating community values is the backbone of the shared learning endeavour in both stages of the incubation programme. Through discussions, workshop activities and collaborative sessions, the DOORS cohort will identify and commit to **Shared Community Values for the Incubation**. The co-creative character of the process will be made explicit from the start, during the kick-off and onboarding, and reiterated through the duration of the programme.

The DOORS consortium aims to create a community of sharing and mutual responsibility, acknowledging the necessity of trust, fuelled by open communication, transparency about needs, resources, boundaries, and feelings. The DOORS team is committed to diversity and fostering well-considered and respectful critical engagement and feedback, embracing vulnerability, and abolishing the proprietary logics.

3.2.4 Community

The format of the programme aims to help museum professionals find like-minded individuals, who work at the intersection of culture, design, and tech, but more importantly people who really care about qualitative change within the museum sector.

DOORS prioritises collaboration over competition. The DOORS team encourages museum professionals to seek out their peers for advice, camaraderie, and collaboration and will embed into the programme formats that enable it. The consortium’s ambition is to challenge the status quo and inspire museums to move forward as effective collaborators.

Blending formats and interlocutors provides a flexible working structure that helps pilot teams reflect on (and upon necessity, reshape) their approach to digital strategies on a higher level — on one side, maintaining ambitious and challenging ideas, on the other, considering their ability to integrate them in real-life contexts.

It is essential to gradually build digital into the DNA of an institution, rather than simply adopting the “shiny” new technologies. The question therefore is how to create transformative processes,

¹⁵ Digital Culture Charter <https://digitalculturecompass.org.uk/The%20Digital%20Culture%20Charter.pdf>

people, technology? Emphasis on capability is fundamental in uncertain times and thus, our work will include:

- creating conversations that challenge mind-sets and connect people to each other
- fuelling collaboration and innovation - thriving in the expected and unexpected
- unleashing innovation – creating new connections and paradigms
- investing in partnerships
- continually improving and evolving the everyday work in museums

The DOORS team believes in people-centred museology, recognising that communities and individuals critically shape how we create, collect, conserve and share collections. Involving communities in the work helps build integrity. Therefore, an important task of a future-proof sector and DOORS in particular, is to build a sector workforce that remains resilient in the face of change, a diverse pool of museum changemakers to take the sector into the future.

3.2.5 Workshops

The process of incubation highlights why and how important it is to own the process and reflect upon it critically. It is thus necessary to communicate the different governance approaches needed for systemic change and for agile piloting as opposed to waterfall-delivered projects. In a digital age, the challenge for any institution is to identify, plan for and resource an appropriate baseline of digital operational capability. Museum teams will therefore need to assimilate and refine the toolsets contextually, reflecting carefully upon learnings from their individual processes of implementation, leaning onto frameworks and approaches offered by the workshops.

The workshops will approach how to courageously acknowledge and work through and within continuous change. Inclusive and regenerative methods, sensemaking, play, scenario planning, systems mapping, and maturity assessments will be employed to help institutions become more confident in how to understand, manage, use, and create digital experiments, products, and services for their specific strategic goals.

The workshops open a framework to develop fit-for-purpose digital mindsets, skill sets, and toolsets to:

- Rethink new ways of working.
- Reimagine their digital ecosystem; and
- Reframe digital (community) practices and processes.¹⁶

¹⁶ Lauren Vargas

When considering the granularity of a maturity model and how it might align with an organization's goals and objectives, Dr. Lauren Vargas¹⁷ - one of the workshop leaders - recommends a model with the following six areas: governance; management; processes; measurement and reporting; community conditions; and technology. The DOORS team will investigate these areas and how digital maturity assessment may become part of a continuous, future-proof practice.

During the DOORS workshops museums will work on:

- Digital Maturity Assessment
- Skills Assessment
- Developing Digital Civility (Inclusive Conversation and Community)
- Audience Development and Comprehension
- Data Management

Museums are trusted channels of quality and authenticity, but they operate in a crowded and ever-growing marketplace of information and ideas. How can museums adapt to a world in which information is available at our fingertips all the time? To remain relevant, museums need to embrace new opportunities to connect, co-create and grow new audiences.

Digital capability is a critical enabler:

- to develop learning experiences and pathways that serve a wide range of learning preferences and needs
- to use data to make better and faster decisions, learn quickly and try new things
- to enhance content, experiences, and access
- to actively improve delivery channels (onsite and online) to galvanise debate, creativity, and action around issues and opportunities for building a more sustainable future

The aspirations of the workshops within Incubation Stage I and II are:

NURTURE INNOVATION ACROSS ORGANISATION

- Embed new innovation methodologies and capabilities across different areas of museum activity
- Build changemaking and entrepreneurial capability

INVEST IN DEVELOPING PEOPLE AND ASSETS FOR THE FUTURE

- Empower, engage, and enable people and provide the right environment for them to thrive
- Invest in right-sized, flexible digital platforms, and effective and cost-efficient back-end systems and processes

¹⁷ <https://yourdigitaltattoo.com/about/>

CREATE A SUSTAINABLE MODEL

- Amplify the impact of museum's core business (collections, exhibitions, education, programmes, research, retail) by applying new digital capabilities
- Establish organisational processes and technology foundations to enable the museum to be agile in response to accelerating change
- Develop new revenue streams and optimise existing commercial ventures

3.2.6 Digital Solutions Providers

As new technologies are rapidly being developed, the market gets increasingly saturated with offers and possibilities. Simultaneously, the Experience Economy has been booming. Changing consumer experiences have led to audiences increasingly preferring them to products and placing more importance on social relationships and services that are personalised to meet individual needs rather than those delivered en masse. This becomes a challenge, particularly for small- and medium-scale institutions, that have fewer financial capacities to commission tailored tools or establish partnerships and/or client relationships with technology providers. Creating a framework and a format for museums to encounter creative tech and providers of digital solutions is imperative, and as such, one of the main focuses of our incubation programme.

This dimension of the programme will consist of two sessions. It will kick-off with a discussion around institutions at the forefront of partnering with industry and entrepreneurs to fast-track innovation and adapt to a dynamic, increasingly digital world. The three institutions that invited innovation eco-system on their premises are New Inc. Incubator within the New Museum in NYC, mahuki at The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa and acmi X accelerator born within the Australian Centre for Moving Image.

The opening session will bring forth the necessity of a mission-led approach to innovation and technology. Museums have the potential to spark new ways of working within what we know as the new creative economy and must seek to disrupt the existing approach rather than simply copying what is already available.¹⁸ Developing new income streams and adopting innovative business models can demonstrate the continued relevance of museums in an increasingly digital age and offer new sustainable methods for funding creative and knowledge-production practice. The following three aspects will be in focus:

- New funding streams
- New relevance
- Organisational change

¹⁸ Murphy, Oonagh. 2018. Coworking Spaces, Accelerators and Incubators: Emerging Forms of Museum Practice in an Increasingly Digital World. *Museum International*, 70(1-2), pp. 62-75.



Format-wise, the two sessions will be clustered around two topics: New content distribution and revenue models and Innovating audience analysis and engagement. Each will include a panel discussion with a curated list of speakers, followed by a round of presentations/ pitching sessions. The pitching sessions will be offering fit-for-use solutions and approaches for the challenges faced. Each presentation will tackle the question of sustainability and efficiency in terms of resources allocation.

The goal of this two-layered programme is to inform about the possibilities and ways to choose and use the right tool / framework for the organization's specific needs, instead of recommending any one tool or provider. Museums will get an opportunity to explore a suite of new ideas that can be applied across core and new business models to develop the cultural sector and give it a soft lift in capability.

Though the museum sector is undergoing digital transformation, it's important to acknowledge this is not to the extent or at the pace desired or needed. Many organisations still have limited budgets, are slow moving (unless immobilised by overly hierarchised structures and broken connections) and have traditionally not been viewed as ready for transformation by external providers, businesses and even sponsors. Creating an interface between museums and creative tech will motivate both sides to think bilaterally about the sector's needs and innovation goals and offer tangible pathways for museums to establish new partnerships. The knowledge base and network of museums will grow in size and value, creating new dialogues, generating knowledge and potentially valuable types of engagement.

The consortium team will be curating the pool of digital solutions providers, taking into account recommendations from the board of advisors, jury members and workshop leaders. As DOORS aims to encourage and support different TRL & experience levels, a diverse pool of technology partners offering various levels of technological complexity will be collected.

The pilots are free to decide on the best-suited technology and partners/providers. This will mostly benefit pilots that have not yet decided on technological partners or specific tools, however, this dimension of the programme can still expand the vocabulary and toolset, fuel discussions on enablers and blockers, and improve comprehension of technological implications. The selection, negotiation and contracting of the technical supplier will be the pilot's responsibility giving them the opportunity to gain the experience of going through the entire process.

The summary goals of the programme element:

- Provide practical references and solutions for optimisation and transformation of the culture and heritage sector
- Enhance the understanding of the sectoral needs and the offers of the digital solutions providers and expand the potential pool of partners and subcontractors
- Identify opportunities for collaborations, within and beyond DOORS



3.2.7 Policy Dimension

DOORS puts deliberate effort in raising awareness about the need for the digital transformation of the museum sector and its gradual evolution and support. DOORS policy dimension is a key component of the overall project and, in particular, the Incubation programme.

All programme elements serve the sustainability aspect of the project, at both the strategic and the pilot level. The project-based funding of digital endeavours is almost chronic and demands us to imagine and inform new types of collaborations and support structures, including funding and granting mechanisms and areas of their applicability. As Seb Chan puts it: “Through my own work, I’ve learned that “digital transformation” is not a state change from caterpillar to butterfly, but a continual organisational change process. In the cultural sector, this change will only flourish as a collective, pan-institutional action. Singular institutional actions have their limits – especially as so much of digital opportunity requires a different way of thinking at scale, as well as different approaches to ‘infrastructure’.”¹⁹

4. Summary

DOORS Incubation Programme builds its methodology on the following **pillars**:

- Assessing current practices and needs through desk research, interviews, workshops and partner engagement
- Enabling opportunities for museums through digital transformation processes in 4 Innovation Areas
- Developing a two-stage pilot scheme to transparently select and efficiently support third parties to implement their innovative experiments
- Strengthening the digital maturity of institutions and empowering their teams by engaging them in addressing the whole digital strategy of their organisations and not only the digital technology behind the pilot
- Focusing on the sustainability of the pilot implementation by guiding the pilots in their individual assessment and strategic planning through a profound diagnostics framework, sustainability plan and guideline outputs
- Accelerating the pilots' impact and exchange with a dedicated incubation programme fostering knowledge transfer, capacity building, peer-to-peer support, iterative learning through internal & external feedback and networking throughout the project duration
- Sharing lessons, pilot outcomes and partner experience through an active collaboration framework, scalable pilot outputs as well as a regular knowledge exchange programme both for third parties and external stakeholders

¹⁹ <https://www.artshub.com.au/news/career-advice/stop-being-reactive-digital-mentorship-is-about-strategic-investment-2488493/>



- Communicating on Europe's digital excellence for museums through the progress and outcomes of pilots and the expertise of the project's orbit of advisors, jurors, mentors and networks
- Engaging with policymakers on all levels through dedicated conferences and publications to advocate for the need to transform museums into digital-native organisations.

DOORS sees itself as an essential, yet only initial step igniting the digital transformation of museums and other existing cultural institutions. The project has foreseen specific efforts to ensure that its results are adaptable and flexible and can be applied to other interested institutions and has devised a strategy to exploit the results beyond the project lifespan and consortium.